THE EFFECTS OF MEMORY STRATEGIES ON YOUNG LEARNERS' VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

BY

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We, Alberto Guardo Castilla and Jorge Villaraga, hereby declare that this Master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university.

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the implications of memory strategies in first grade learners' vocabulary acquisition. A quantitative approach was carried out with the participation of 28 boys from first grade at the Aspaen Gimnasio Cartagena. Three units were designed to teach 48 new words through the planned and explicit use of memory strategies to a group of 13 students (experimental). The same amount of new words was taught to 15 students under conventional vocabulary instructions, involving various and sometimes not consciously planned strategies (control). The instruments used to collect the data for this study were a pre-test and post-test at the beginning and at the end of the intervention, and achievement tests after the application of each memory strategy. The results showed that memory strategy instructions benefit students' vocabulary breadth.

Key words: learning strategies, memory strategies, vocabulary, experimental design, young learners.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

There are fundamental elements in learning a language and developing proficiency. One of those fundamental elements is vocabulary. It is undeniable that vocabulary acquisition plays a paramount role in the interpretation and communication of meaning in general. Some authors have highlighted this role, for instance, Wilkins (1972, p. 111) states that "without grammar, very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." Similarly, Schmitt (2008) adds that vocabulary is fundamental in the process of mastering a language, and Mediha and Enisa (2014) argue that communication is almost impossible without having a suitable range of words through which ideas can be conveyed. That is to say, language skills might be hindered by the lack of the required vocabulary involved in communicating meaning.

The recognition of words is a very different process for native speakers, compared to that of nonnative speakers. From an early age, a native speaker learns to recognize printed words that are probably part of his or her oral vocabulary. On the other hand, the case of nonnative children deserves to be studied since teaching them new words in the classroom may often represent the first formal encounter with the English language as in many cases in EFL and ESL contexts their parents or relatives do not speak English or they might not be in contact with English other than through the exposure they get during their English classes. Finding unknown words and trying to make sense of them might be frustrating. In a research study conducted by Pineda (2010), this author found that the strategies used by Colombian learners to try to infer the meaning of new words are limited. Therefore, providing learners with strategies to learn new words can be

considered as a must. Once students are familiarized with the strategies, this can also help them to decide the right one to use in different circumstances.

Furthermore, one of the most significant factors of success in and out school for children is vocabulary (Rupley & Slough, 2010). Nevertheless, very few studies in Colombia focus on the development of vocabulary learning strategies on young learners, and language programs in schools tend to ignore their importance in order to increase learner's word knowledge.

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of memory strategies as an alternative to help young learners to acquire and recall vocabulary. The strategies were implemented in a private school in Cartagena, Aspaen Gimnasio Cartagena, as part of its first-grade curriculum.

The research question that guides this project is:

- What is the effect of the implementation of memory strategies on young learners' vocabulary breadth in a private male school in Cartagena, Colombia?

Specific objectives:

- Determine students' vocabulary breath before the intervention through the application of a vocabulary pre-test.
- Determine students' vocabulary breath after the intervention through the application of a vocabulary post-test.

Context of the study

Aspaen Gimnasio Cartagena is a private school located in the northern area of Cartagena, Bolivar. It is part of the ASPAEN (Asociación Nacional para la Enseñanza), a group of schools whose mission is to support parents in the education of their children not only in terms of their

academic and intellectual development, but also in terms of their spiritual and value formation throughout their educational process from kindergarten up to high school. The founders of this institution founded their project around values, integrity, and single-sex education, which means that boys study with boys and are guided by male teachers and girls study with girls and are guided by female teachers. This is called by the Aspaen organization personalized style formation according to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. This educational project aims to understand every person as unique and meet their needs according to their ages and sex in a proper environment.

The school is divided into three levels: primary school (first grade to fourth grade), Middle School (fifth grade to eighth grade), and high school (ninth grade to twelfth grade). The boys that attend this school belong mostly to the upper-middle and upper social classes of the city.

Most of the population of this school lives in the suburb area of Cartagena, Bolivar, in neighborhoods such as Barcelona de Indias, Barceloneta, Bocagrande, and Manga. They belong to wealthy families and, in many cases, students pursue study abroad experiences. That is why English learning is very important for them and the school is under constant scrutiny concerning its language teaching effectiveness. Therefore, the institution representatives and parents are always looking forward to counting on high quality teachers, curriculums, resources, and school facilities.

In this educational institution, there are some gaps in terms of EFL vocabulary instruction, learning, and procedures in general. There are no defined guidelines in place for the teaching of English vocabulary, especially at the lower levels when vocabulary acquisition is crucial for the English foundations of young learners' language development. That is to say,

there are many young learners who lack knowledge of basic words to speak or read in the target language at school. These are students, who are at the early stages of their foreign language learning process, and who are acquiring the fundamental vocabulary to identify, name, and briefly describe people, animals, objects, stages, and processes. For these students at such an early stage in the target language learning process, vocabulary is essential for their consolidation of the foreign language foundations. In relation to this, Pan and Xu (2011) state "vocabulary is the most important element in learning well a foreign language as one of three basic parts (phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar)" (p.1586) and Sedita (2005), "vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts" (p.1).

Learners of this institution will be exposed to international tests provided by Cambridge in different stages of their academic journey. These tests are regularly applied in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades respectively and represent an important factor in order to measure schools English level, as other similar schools, located in the same area, are also advised and assessed by Cambridge. Therefore, Gimnasio Cartagena has established this as one of its priorities.

The quantity and variety of words that appear in international tests is unpredictable by learners and alternatives must be implemented to enhance their performance at reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Stahl (1990) found that vocabulary instructions directly improve comprehension and that difficult words in texts decrease the understanding of it. For these reasons, learners must be prepared in advance on the right strategies.

In lower levels, students' knowledge of certain words is taken for granted since teachers tend to assume that students know them, coming from an English immersion program. However, the amount of words that these kids know is unpredictable since there is no formal evidence that

shows it. Teaching a lesson without a diagnostic of the vocabulary breadth of learners could be contradictory. Those vocabulary gaps could last or worsen as learners advance and cause issues in their learning process. Also students may have trouble understanding some texts due to lack of words or vocabulary. Therefore, teachers should provide explicit instructions and strategies for students to use them autonomously in the future. Additionally, there is no formal evidence of the vocabulary level that students have at the beginning of the academic year since this information is not reported by the kindergarten section, which is not the same institution and is located in different facilities. According to Oxford (1990) memory strategies are one of the most suitable strategies to help pupils to store and retrieve information. Therefore, memory strategies are taken into consideration for this study in order to explore whether its implementation may or may not help students in the process of learning vocabulary.

Research has shown the effectiveness of the implementation of memory strategies in class. For instance, word cards facilitate the learning and recall of significant numbers of new words in a short time (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998; Nation 2008) and can also help students with special needs (DeWitt, 2010). Additionally, memory strategies can easily fit into different learning styles. Arias (2003) points out that association with pictures is effective for visually oriented students. Moreover, strategies such as association with pictures are really helpful in terms of retrieving information. According to Thornbury (2004), learners can create association networks with a topic, which involves the use of grouping and association with images.

This paper has been separated into different chapters. First, the introduction chapter contains an initial outline of the central ideas involved in the paper and also its rationale is presented. Then, the research questions are outlined as well as the main purpose of this study.

The second chapter contains the Theoretical Framework, which develops the theoretical foundations that guide the investigation. Next, the Methodology chapter presents the research method chosen, the kind of analysis of the research and an explanation of the tools and practices planned and applied for data gathering. The Results chapter analyzes the information gathered in the implementation of the memory strategies and the effects shown in each group; then, the Discussion chapter analyzes in detail the results obtained by both the experimental and the control group in the data gathering tools. Finally, the conclusions obtained from the present study are drawn with some implications, limitations, and suggestions.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

For around the last fifteen years, Colombia has intended to implement strategies in its educational system with the purpose of benefiting students and preparing them to participate in an intercultural society where a foreign language can be learned in a meaningful way. One of these strategies includes the strengthening of the teaching of English as a foreign language in schools as summarized by Herazo, Jerez, and Lorduy (2012):

> The most recent of these policy initiatives is called Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo 2004 – 2019 (henceforth PNB), introduced by the Colombian government in 2004. The overarching goal of the PNB is to develop Colombians' functional language proficiency in English throughout the different levels of the Colombian educational system (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2005a). If the population becomes proficient in English, the official discourse reads, Colombia will become part of universal communication processes, a global economy, and a

multicultural world (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2005b. (p.200)

This program is aimed, among other goals, to have school heads in Colombia make decisions in order to include and/or reinforce the teaching of the English language and be aware of the criteria and the aspects involved in teaching a foreign language. Although some of the decisions involved in the PNB have been controversial and criticized by some educational sectors, they have tried to provide a framework for schools to review their curricula and, in some cases, strengthen curricular structures and teaching practices.

In Colombia, Cartagena is in particular one of the cities that has clear needs in terms of foreign language education given its status as world tourist destination. These needs have caused a real increase in bilingual schools. Likewise, schools have begun a process to modify their programs, to hire bilingual staff, and to help their professors develop the necessary competences in order to teach English.

Some studies in the process of teaching a second language at early ages claim the relevance of preparing students in the acquisition of communicative skills, although at this stage of learning, reading takes certain importance over the other skills. Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2004) state that there are certain skills, which should be taught to start a reading process; hence, the instructional goals have to promote them through different vocabulary strategies to encourage an appropriate reading success for learners. At this point, there are many factors that should be taken into account to start the development of the L2, but especially in the processes of young learners who initiate this learning.

Thus, the first step to become knowledgeable about how language works is focused on linguistic structures such as lexis, grammar, function, and phonology and linguistic skills such as

reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The word lexis refers to vocabulary, which means the words in a specific language. Consequently, when teachers teach vocabulary to their students not only do they teach how to write a word, but also the different forms of it or word family, and they take into account the time in which it is being spoken, and also how it is used according to its context. Teaching vocabulary is a fundamental component of English language proficiency development, therefore, it cannot be seen as the mere teaching of a number of words. Likewise, it goes further to build the language, which is taught as a whole (See Table 1).

Table 1: *Discovering Learning Burden (Nation, 2006, p. 3)*

Meaning	Form a meaning concept and referents associations	Is the word a loan word in the L1? Is there an L1 word with roughly the same meaning? Does the word fit into the same sets as an L1 word of similar meaning?
Form	Spoken form Written form Word form	Can the learners repeat the word accurately if they hear it? Can the learners write the word correctly if they hear it? Can the learners identify known affixes in the word?
Use	Grammatical funtions Collocations Contrains on use	Does the word fit into predictable grammar patterns? Does the word have the same collocations as an L1 word of similar meaning? Does the word have the same restrictions on its use as an L1 word of similar meaning?

Given the importance of vocabulary for language learning, particularly, at the beginning stage when students are appropriating notions and concepts, the purpose of this research is to implement memory vocabulary learning strategies and analyze their effect in student vocabulary breadth in the context of Gimnasio Cartagena School in Cartagena. This study acknowledges the

importance of depth in vocabulary learning; however, given the stage of the language learning process of the target population, this study will focus on the impact of memory strategies in the breadth of students' vocabulary mainly since it is at this point when they are exposed to and learning as much as possible basic vocabulary foundations.

It is evident that success in communicative skills depends on a solid foundation, including well-developed and structured vocabulary, which is an important element in language learning. That is to say, the lack of words in certain circumstances could be an obstacle in the learning process of a language. Therefore, vocabulary should be understood as a paramount component of communication.

Vocabulary learning and development contribute significantly to overall text comprehension. Nation (2006) states that students who are able to understand better the words in reading and listening activities do so because they recognize and get familiar with meaningful words from the texts that draw their attention. This means that students should be exposed to a variety of methods to increase their vocabulary, and teachers need to find different strategies in order to help learners to be able to understand the words in the texts they are reading or listening.

This chapter firstly elaborates on the main components involved in the concept of vocabulary and the importance of vocabulary is emphasized. Then, this section analyzes some suggested strategies that could be applied for young learners' vocabulary learning process, focusing on memory strategies, as these ones are the focus of the implementation conducted in this study. Finally, it highlights some studies conducted in the field of language teaching that can provide a noteworthy guideline to this research.

The concept of vocabulary

Vocabulary can be mistakenly considered a group of words that must be learned in any language to be able to speak at first; this statement is incomplete and poor in the sense that communicative skills require more than just a quantity of expressions or words. According to Alqahtani (2015), "vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a critical tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impedes successful communication" (p.22). Thus, these limitations are related to many factors, not only on the size of words known but also an awareness of the meaning(s), use and form to identify and apply in context the words learned. Likewise, vocabulary involves specific and particular words and units of language to be combined. In relation to this, Carter (1998) argues the following:

> The former (grammatical words) comprises a small and finite class of words which includes pronouns (I, you, me), articles (the, a), auxiliary verbs (must, could, shall), prepositions (in, on, with, by) and conjunctions (and, but). Grammatical words like these are also variously known as 'functional words', 'functors', 'empty words'. Lexical words, on the other hand—which are also variously known as 'full words' or' 'content words'—include nouns (man, cat), adjectives (large, beautiful), verbs (find, wish) and adverbs (brightly, luckily). (p. 8)

It is clear that the lists of components mentioned above are the essential elements to initiate what is the key in real communication, a series of words to be used in order to make meaning in context.

Throughout history in the learning of a second language, there have been multiple methods regarding vocabulary learning as the main core. Thus, a suitable definition of vocabulary that this study will adopt is based on Nation's (2006) exploration of teaching vocabulary, which goes beyond a simple concept related to terms that students should know in

the language learning process. It means that vocabulary refers to words that contain not only meaning but also form, and use.

The importance of teaching vocabulary in English language acquisition

One of the most important pillars for reading development is vocabulary. Together with phonics, fluency, and comprehension, among others, vocabulary is a fundamental component in producing and supporting ideas correctly. It is essential in reading instruction since knowing an array of words could enable the learner to understand new information conveyed by the vocabulary used (Sedita, 2005).

According to Ramadhani (2016), "teacher has an important role to build children's vocabularies. She should know the factors in teaching such as methods, strategies, techniques, and materials, so that the teacher can convey the material well in accordance with children's characteristics" (p, 2). Thus, vocabulary has stages of learning according to the characteristics of the students in which the role of the teacher is significant. In the case of children at the beginning, the meaning of the word is something general, and with time, the words are more contextualized.

The process of constructing meaning in the acquisition of a second language is a challenging process in which the student should become familiar with expressions and words that should be contextualized to get meaning. Lessard-Clouston (2013) states that vocabulary is focused not only on single words but also on chunks of several words, which represent a specific meaning. As it is claimed by Blachowicz (2005), "having a strong vocabulary is not only a school goal, it is a characteristic that allows us to participate actively in our world, and it is viewed by those we meet as the hallmark of the educated person" (p.14).

Either in first or second language acquisition, vocabulary learning is an essential component. Researchers argue that vocabulary determines the level of success while learning a language (Gu, 2003; Laufer & Nation, 1999; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000). Thus, in the absence of the suitable vocabulary, learners are not able to comprehend others or express their own ideas or feelings. Likewise, unknown words found in the middle of a reading or listening task or real-life situation may cause difficulties during information processing.

The term vocabulary is immediately associated with the knowledge of words. Schmitt and Schmitt (2005) explain that a word refers to a sound or combination of them that carries meaning and is finally produced in spoken or written form. However, the fact of mastering a word involves several aspects related to pronunciation, spelling, and meaning.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are fundamental in making the learning process easier and more enjoyable for students. As Oxford (1990) claims:

> Learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competences. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence. (p.1)

That is why the implementation of this type of strategies is key for a better learning acquisition in which students will be supported much more by teachers' guidance by using strategies to make learners gain the achievement goals.

Through the history of language teaching and learning, there have been different positions in regards to the variety of strategies that teachers could find or implement in their classes. Strategies can be used depending on the learners' English language level and their cognitive development stage. According to Oxford (1990), "the system of language learning strategies is divided into two major classes: Direct and indirect. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups" (p.14). These group of teaching language strategies comprise: Memory strategies (Direct), Cognitive Strategies (Direct), Compensation Strategies (Direct), Social Strategies (Indirect), Affective Strategies (Indirect), Metacognitive (Indirect) which are represented in the following figure:

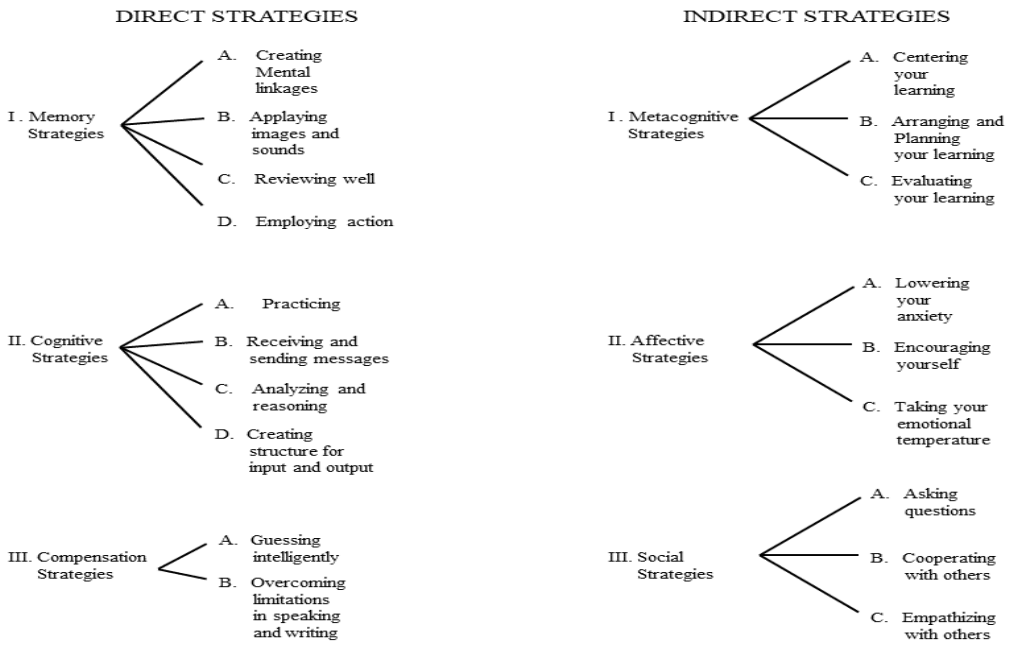

Figure 1. Diagram of The Strategy System Showing Two Classes, Six Groups, and 19 Sets. (Oxford, 1990, p. 17)

It is important to highlight that in this representation Oxford also shows nineteen sets, which are kinds of actions or types of materials used in the classroom by teachers to try to make students understand a lesson. Oxford (1990) proposes a system of learning strategies in which two major categories, as previously mentioned, direct strategies and indirect strategies, support and complement each other. This is shown in the following figure:

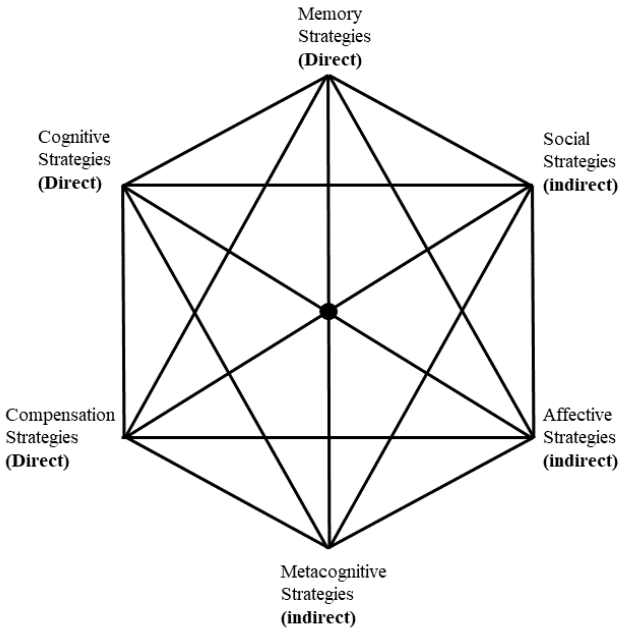

Figure 2. Interrelationships between direct and indirect and among the Six Strategy Groups (Oxford, 1990, p. 15)

In the figure above, it is possible to observe that there is interrelationship among the different six groups of strategies, which can be used separately in a given lesson. Conversely, they can work together and sometimes in sequence to accomplish the language target goal. As an example of this, teachers can start a lesson by using memory strategies to make students recall topics or to make the recognition of the topics intelligible for them. Then, cognitive strategies are

used to make students understand and produce in order to practice the topic, and finally, compensation strategies are used to find if there is any gap remaining and to cover them. While all display of direct strategies have been set, indirect strategies take place simultaneously when teachers encourage students to work in teams, set a prepared and comfortable environment, and when students can self-evaluate their learning progress and their results.

It is noteworthy to promote learning strategies in L2 acquisition, and it is important that in doing so, teachers take into consideration aspects such as students' profile, interests, class environment, language target goals, cognitive criteria, and teacher-student interactions. Oxford (1994) proposed some L2 strategy training such as the following:

- L2 strategy training should be based clearly on students' attitudes, beliefs, and stated needs.
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and the learners' style of learning.
- Training should, if possible, be integrated into regular L2 activities over a long period of time line rather than taught as a separate, short intervention.
- Students should have plenty of opportunities for strategy training during language classes.
- Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study.
- Affective issues such as anxiety, motivation, beliefs, and interests--all of which influence strategy choice should be directly addressed by L2 strategy training.

- Strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.
- Strategy training should not be solely tied to the class at hand; it should provide strategies that are transferable to future language tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be somewhat individualized; as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.
- Strategy training should provide students with a mechanism to evaluate their own progress and to evaluate the success of the training and the value of the strategies in multiple tasks. (p.4)

According to Oxford's strategy training, it is extremely important to consider providing students with the necessary means, so they themselves can find ways to achieve the target objectives and refine their skills during the learning process. Thus, these L2 strategy training aspects are also fundamental for the appropriate development of a class interaction in which the teacher training or pedagogical competence will affect students in such a way that they can feel confident and immersed in a healthy environment conducive to learning.

Furthermore, a main factor that makes teachers think is when their pupils are having problems in learning new vocabulary. This raises questions in relation to whether they must spend time teaching vocabulary learning strategies to them. It is important that teachers take time to teach learning strategies and, as well, vocabulary learning strategies. Chamot (1999) validates this belief when she mentions the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning, and some techniques for memorizing vocabulary and other information. Chamot (1999) argues that although repetition can be considered a strategy to learn a language, by itself it can be ineffective. Therefore, establishing mental links or connections as well as appealing to students'

prior knowledge can actually reinforce students' learning and make it more effective; finding meaning through association can lead to stronger and more long lasting learning.

Consistent with this line of thought, Chamot (1999) suggests the implementation of memory strategies such as the following:

- Imagine with key words. Using a keyword creates a visual and personal association between meaning and sound.
- Group/classify. Grouping entails making categories by classifying words in relation to attributes. Sun related to suntan, hot, beach.
- Transfer/cognates. It involves transferring the knowledge from one language (mother tongue or other) to another language. Prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc. paracaídas in Spanish = parachute in English. (p.234)

The importance of supporting students to memorize new vocabulary applying different procedures is also considered by writers, such as Wenden and Rubin (1987), who use the term Mnemonics, when "a retrieval plan is developed during encoding and mental imagery, using both visual and verbal aids to help individuals learn faster and recall better" (p.43). Also according to Oxford (1990), "learning strategies have been used for thousands of years as the name of mnemonics or memory devices used in ancient times to help storytellers to remember their lines" (p.1). This idea is a strong reason for using learning strategies in the students' learning development in L2 acquisition, because they can contribute to the effectiveness in the students' memorization and motivation in the different steps of their learning processes.

Vocabulary learning strategies

To understand what is behind vocabulary in terms of how it should be learned and the amount of words that should be learned and their meaning, Schoonen and Verhallen (2008) point out:

> Depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge, which have attracted a great deal of attention in the field, refer to two contrasting terms. Vocabulary breadth is a quantitative term, and it can be defined as the number of words known by a person. On the other hand, vocabulary depth is a qualitative term, and it is about the knowledge of different aspects of a word such as "its meaning (to several levels of precision), its grammatical categories, its derivations, its pragmatic and sociolinguistic value, and its collocations (p. 212).

Therefore, the contribution of a solid vocabulary towards text comprehension is indisputable if there are multiple opportunities from reading experiences to increase word knowledge.

As previously mentioned, taking into account the importance of vocabulary teaching and also knowing that both sides, breadth and depth, are important, we decided to focus on breadth not because we think teaching vocabulary depth is not important for our students, but at this young ages and early stages of L2 learning, teachers and the institution focus more their effort on students' acquisition of certain vocabulary words that help them understand what they read and listen.

That is why the emphasis of this research will be on vocabulary breadth because it is the need identified at the lower levels at the target school. Exploring students' vocabulary

acquisition and the impact of certain memory strategies is what this study attempts to unveil. The factors involved in the study of vocabulary are related to the amount of words that young learners can identify and use. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge allows more production in L2 because it is used for students like a bank of resources that can be used by them when it is needed and throughout their four skills. In this way, stronger vocabulary helps learners understand much better when someone is speaking to them, when they want to say something to someone else, when they read a textbook or any written content, and also when they need to write. The success of students' achievement and engagement in activities of these kinds will greatly depend on primarily how many words they know. Nation (2006) elaborates on this idea arguing that:

> Vocabulary size measurement is important for planning, diagnosis, and research. It is not easy to plan a sensible vocabulary development program without knowing where learners are now in their vocabulary growth. Research on the amount of vocabulary needed for receptive use indicates that learners need around 6,000 word families to read novels written for teenagers, to watch movies, and to participate in friendly conversation. Around 8,000 to 9,000 words are needed to read newspapers, novels, and some academic texts. (p.1)

To face new words in a certain context might not be an easy task for an L2 or even an L1 learner. Therefore, teachers must provide helpful strategies that help learners in the development of the target language. Despite the strong studies conducted for vocabulary instruction in literacy teaching and learning, researchers such as Gillis (2015) and Bukowiecki (2006) point out that teachers, especially novice ones, are not familiar with the most effective strategies and are less comfortable with incorporating them into their teaching practice.

Vocabulary strategies have been studied by several researchers. Ahmed (1989) established, in his study in a Sudanese school, that 38 vocabulary strategies were used by learners and classifies them into four groups: strategies for memorization, strategies of practice and dictionary, strategies of note-taking, and strategies of group work. Likewise, in a study conducted in China, Gu and Johnson (1986) classified 91 strategies into two groups: metacognitive and cognitive. Furthermore, Schmitt (2000) proposes the terms discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. He states that discovery strategies are used to learn the meaning of unknown words and consolidation strategies are used to learn word meaning and incorporate it into the vocabulary. Authors such as Oxford (1990) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990) see learning and consolidation as the combination of direct strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, social, and affective). There are some other studies worth mentioning in order to highlight how the implementation of strategies to learn vocabulary can encourage the development of communicative skills. For instance, Yalçın (2012) conducted a study that employed a descriptive research design to examine vocabulary learning strategies used by 1296 students between ages 17 and 18, with different English proficiency levels. These students took vocabulary tests and questionnaires that showed as a result that the participants used a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies. In this study, memory strategies correlated positively with the participants' academic and general vocabulary proficiency levels, even though the difference between the proficiency of the students' groups, they showed a wide range of vocabulary. This inquiry has shown the importance of using learning strategies in the development of text understanding and also the significance of vocabulary development to go beyond the comprehension of explicit and implicit ideas in a text.

This analysis has been carried out in order to examine several areas of literature that provide the actual work and the gaps related to lack of vocabulary in this area that this study aims to fulfill. While the first section reviewed the importance of vocabulary, the second section will define several vocabulary learning strategies and studies that establish methods that learners can apply in different contexts. This inquiry intends to explore strategies in the acquisition of vocabulary.

In the literature on vocabulary learning, there are not as many studies in vocabulary learning strategies for beginner-young learners as there are for upper levels in the same area, especially in Colombia. Some of these studies are presented as follows.

Rabadi (2016) conducted a study where he was trying to make teachers aware of the ten most used strategies and the nine least used strategies by undergraduate EFL students of Jordania. For this purpose, the five categories of strategies by Schmitt's taxonomy (Memory, Determination, Social, Cognitive, and Metacognitive) was followed and the results were obtained by applying a questionnaire containing forty items selected from Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire which was administered to a pool of 110 Jordanian students almost totally in English Language and Literature from eight Jordanian universities. The results showed the strategies that students least used belong to the group of the metacognitive strategies and the most used belong to the group of memory strategies.

Letchumanan, Muthusamy, Govindasamy, Potchelvi, and Farashaiyan (2016) conducted a study that helped to identify the various learning strategies that students use to understand a word, strategies that later on become the ones they always utilize to learn vocabulary words. The finding of preferred vocabulary strategies showed that students prefer to use strategies that

involve oral communication, repetition, memorization, and taking notes which belong to the division that O'Malley & Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), and Schmitt (1997; 2000) propose like memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, affective, and determination strategies. The students were exposed to the new vocabulary by using a combination of different strategies suggested by the researchers to acquire vocabulary words in a more effective way rather than only adopting one group of specific strategies to make learners transfer and store the target vocabulary in their long term memory and be able to use these words when they needed them in the future.

In order to choose from this variety of strategies, something important to bear in mind is the context and the cognitive and language proficiency level of the learner. The next section will elaborate on young learners.

Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

Young learners mostly obtain words from familiar environments they are exposed to, such environments as their homes, parks, and classrooms. Teachers start teaching students basic words that they find and observe in their own classroom because, while the latter are learning unknown words and a new language, it is going to be easier if they can see what they are learning. Hence, when teaching young learners, teachers should use more concrete and specific language in order to make students relate what is shown to what it is said to them.

French (1983) states that, in the first stage of teaching English vocabulary, vocabulary lessons contain familiar words of objects in the classroom, words like: pencil, desk, board, lockers, door, chair, pencil case, notebook, book, and backpack. Therefore, it is common to find these words in the initial or introductory units, chapters, or lessons from the textbooks because

this makes students easily comprehend the meaning of vocabulary when they can see and touch it. Having these criteria allows for an appropriate point of departure for English teaching vocabulary to young learners.

Children at early ages are developing their main skills; speaking, writing, reading, and listening, and in order to develop these skills, they need vocabulary, among other basic sub-skills, in order to communicate in the L2. Therefore, they should be exposed to a variety of stimuli in order to provide enough input to develop the basis that is needed to comprehend, speak, write, and read. Young learners begin a visual discrimination of some pictures (or images) to memorize simple words of some terms that are meaningful for them and also are found in their daily life.

The experience of learning vocabulary is focused on the way teachers encourage children to assimilate an amount of words that are relevant. Children should not only be exposed to a variety of methods in which they can visualize the words through cards but also they have to memorize them and see them/listen to them in as many contexts and times as possible. By repeatedly identifying and reproducing, and ultimately using the word, students can consolidate their knowledge of the target words. Taking into consideration what has been mentioned above, Allen (2006) points out that there are five reasons why direct vocabulary instruction should be incorporated in class. Some of them are reading comprehension and writing improvement, the acquisition of new concepts, and the betterment of vocabulary depth. The input of the vocabulary for children depends on many factors that are related firstly with language acquisition because they are just learning phonemes, phonics, and other chunks. Thus pupils understand some words at the beginning because they can be decoded and besides they are associated with something familiar in their life and interests. Therefore, vocabulary learning has different stages at early

ages in which children are increasing the amount of words when they are refining their reading and oral abilities. This idea is claimed by Kamil and Hierbert (2005) when they explain that "this relationship implies that the texts that children are given in early reading instruction must be closely tied to their oral language abilities. The vocabulary that young readers are asked to decode cannot be far more complex than that of their oral language" (p. 4).

On the other hand, the teacher has an important role in the process of using direct vocabulary instructions to teach children and the implementation of strategies in order to provide an effective and successful learning.

Thus, the incorporation of multiple-strategies allows learners the opportunity to learn not only in a variety of ways but also to improve vocabulary more significantly. As the result of a study conducted by Allen (2006), she provides a series of ways to support students developing word knowledge when they have vocabulary comprehension and use problems when they encounter unknown words in a reading. In helping students learn new vocabulary, Allen (2006) applied strategies such as repeating and describing words, supporting words with visuals, connecting words to students' lives, making associations, giving definitions, and comparing and contrasting.

Vocabulary is at the core of the English language teaching, and learning and consolidating vocabulary taking into consideration the amount of vocabulary that should be acquired depending on the age/proficiency level is fundamental. New and meaningful words must be introduced to motivate students to increase the breadth and depth of their vocabulary and, therefore, allow them to understand and express abstract, more complex concepts. As Wantini (2010) argues, "vocabulary is important because it is the basic element to gain other

competences like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Considering the importance of vocabulary competence, it is better to introduce vocabulary earlier" (p.11).

English teachers know very well how important vocabulary is. They know that even though students can convey meaning with a basic range of high frequency words, their possibility to express complex and abstract ideas will depend on the expansion of their vocabulary repertoire, from 6.000 to 9.000 words as mentioned before in the section Vocabulary learning strategies (as well as certain knowledge of language structure). Therefore, language teaching is expected to create opportunities for students to learn and increase their vocabulary as much as possible. The teacher should able to present vocabulary well and effectively and apply a variety of strategies that can create good atmosphere in the teaching and learning process, as it is stated by Eka (2016), "the more diverse, creative and effective teaching strategies the teacher in the English classroom employs, the richer the students' language becomes and the more likely they will experience successes with the content and will be able to communicate with various registers**"** (p. 181). This means that students' vocabulary learning not only depends on how many words they know by themselves but also how the teachers apply an array of strategies to help students to acquire, understand, and remember the words they need to learn in order to use them accurately and properly in their context. The section that follows will review some studies related to EFL vocabulary teaching strategies.

Vocabulary Studies

There are some studies related to how to teach vocabulary depending on the needs or gaps of the teaching contexts as the one conducted by Wantini (2010). This author's motivation was to focus on his fourth grade students' vocabulary learning, especially on the difficulty they

had forgetting easily the words taught in classes. Even though the most common material in SD (School of Design) Negeri Kalimacan in Academic school, Surakarta, Indonesia that is provided to students is vocabulary material, it was not enough to make learners master the meaning of the words, which was the purpose of the study. In order to enhance the students' vocabulary learning, the researcher applied in this Academic School the use of realia as a strategy to teach to learners the meaning of the vocabulary words. This strategy allows students to have contact with real-life objects in order to associate them with the images they observed in the textbooks; therefore, realia facilitates students' understanding of words by illustrating the meaning of the vocabulary in a direct way. The study's results of Wantini (2010) proved that there is a positive effect on students' motivation for being eager, willing to answer, and working in class activities.

Another study, although not focused on young learners, but relevant to this study, was conducted by Rousoulioti and Mouti (2016) who investigated and applied discovery strategies (determination and social strategies) into two groups for the process of learning unknown words in reading and discovering the meaning of a word by implementing strategies such as check for L1 correlations, using word lists, using picture cards, demanding for translation , asking for synonyms of a new word, and for using the vocabulary in context.

The results of this research obtained by the implementation of these learning strategies and the application of a questionnaire proved that students were able to find the meaning of the words in a text, so in other words, students applied effectively the strategy of assigning meaning to a word through contextual clues.

Llamosas (2011) argues that there are a few studies based on what learning strategies students can apply to master vocabulary consisting of nouns, adjectives, numbers, and greetings

in order to be reproduced according to oral and verbal demands of speaking. Therefore, her proposal was focused on providing learning strategies at higher levels at a local institution that offers the specialty of teaching English in L2 in Arequipa (Peru). The importance of this study is to make teachers aware of the focus of their teaching, which should not be only grammar but also vocabulary. Therefore, it makes no sense to teach grammar if there is a lack of vocabulary, which causes difficulty in students' comprehension in the foreign language. Learning an adequate range of words is conducive to better ways to express ideas and to the development of the other communicative skills properly in reading, writing, and listening. The author created a program (VIP program) for the improvement of vocabulary in their students by implementing a compilation of strategies to a specific group. In the initial phase both the experimental and the control group in the pre-test showed similarities in writing and speaking. Afterwards, when the post-test was applied to the experimental group, positive results were evidenced in a real increase of vocabulary.

Research in Colombia related to the process of learning vocabulary is mentioned by Perez and Alvira (2017) who conducted an action research study that intended to explore the effectiveness of using three vocabulary memory strategies: words cards, association with pictures, and association with a topic through fables in the acquisition of vocabulary words in a group of EFL low-level proficiency teenagers in a public school in Espinal, Tolima-Colombia. The instruments of data collected were questionnaires, vocabulary tests, and a researcher's journal to show progressively an increase in the vocabulary knowledge of the students and the capacity to recall words that was one of the main problems of this inquiry. This study is relevant because of the use of fables to try to affect cognitive and affective students to make them change their perception of vocabulary learning.

On the other hand, it is relevant to mention the lack of studies in young learners related to the process of learning vocabulary in Colombia. The current literature on the area revolves around some cases focused on teenagers or University students. There is a study, for instance, carried out with pupils from the Universidad de Nariño and Universidad Mariana, in Pasto, Colombia. In this study, Ibarra and Martínez (2018) determined how working memory strategies could help to retain vocabulary studies in English lessons. Two groups of students were involved in the study, the experimental one with 28 students and the control one with 22 students, who were exposed to a series of memory strategies during the period of ten weeks. The results demonstrated that the experimental group accomplished the target goals proposed in the lessons related to the words that had to be memorized by using working memory strategies; this group showed gradual progress in the memorization and recall of the words studied and also, they showed an improvement in the general competences in the foreign language.

The section that follows will describe a tool selected for the purpose of this research in order to identify students' vocabulary breadth. It will present the characteristics of it.

The Picture Vocabulary Size Test (PVST)

This instrument is a type of software that establishes the amount of words that children should know at a certain age. Anthony and Nation (2017) claim that the Picture Vocabulary Size Test (PVST) is a test of receptive vocabulary size. The test measures whether the test-taker can find a suitable meaning (a picture) for a given partly contextualized word form. As the authors explain, this test aims to measure the most frequent 6000 receptive vocabulary word families of English of both pre-literate native and young ESL/EFL learners.

PVST description

Nation and Anthony (2017) state that the Picture Vocabulary Size Test (PVST) is a computer-based test of receptive vocabulary size, designed in order to measure the vocabulary size of native speakers of the English language up to eight years old and young non-native speakers of English by applying to the learners 96 set of four groups of a pictures where the student can interpret them in context.

The software is used as a tool to diagnose how many vocabulary words students know and relate in a context coherent with their young age. Since it is applied to young learners, it is recommended that students take the test in the company of the teacher, who plays an important role in the motivation and concentration of the student. The idea is that the teacher applies the test to students one by one and says words of encouragement, if necessary, to keep students from getting distracted because the exam does not have a set time.

The PVST was chosen because it was the tool that best fit the context of Aspaen Gimnasio Cartagena in which it was applied. It was also chosen because it made it easier for the student to take the test in a more interactive way that could be comfortable, and it could show to this study the actual vocabulary breath of the learners.

According to Nation and Anthony (2017) the following are, among others, some of the possible questions or areas of inquiry for which the PVST can be a useful tool:

- Testing vocabulary size and growth
- Do young children have a large enough vocabulary size to begin learning to read?

- How wide is the range of vocabulary sizes at each age level? What are the likely causes of this variation? (p.9)

Administering the PVST.

The test implementation requires a sequence of stages that have to be supervised by the person in charge of the students' guidance to facilitate the interaction between the software and the test takers and guarantee the normal development of the test. Nation and Anthony (2017) indicate some steps for the implementation of this test. These steps include selection of test items by the administrator all the way through the retrieval of the file containing students' results.

Given the language level and age range of the target population selected for this study, the PVST will be used in order to determine the vocabulary breadth of first graders at the school Gimnasio Cartagena in Cartagena. The next chapter describes the methodology implemented in this study, including the research approach and how the test was used in order to measure the English vocabulary breath of the target students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Concept

Research is at the heart of generating new knowledge. It also allows humankind to verify or follow up on accepted "truths" and transform realities. In education, research helps to delve into areas such as learning, teaching, methodologies, strategies, materials, educational policies, assessment, curriculum, teacher/learner agency, among many others. Currently, teachers do not necessarily have to lean on the shoulders of giants or advanced researchers who are expected to

contribute to a given area of interest, but they can be reflective professionals who document, analyze, and evolve continuously on the basis of their own informed and documented practice.

According to Creswell (2012) research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. At a general level, research consists of three steps:

1. Pose a question.

2. Collect data to answer the question.

3. Present an answer to the question. (p.3)

As a process, research must follow some steps in sequence, and each one of them has a purpose that supports the next step to be carried out in a given order. According to Creswell (2012) the process of research consists of six steps: "identifying a research problem, reviewing the literature, specifying a purpose for research, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the data, and reporting and evaluating research" (p.7).

This can be observed more detailed in the following figure:

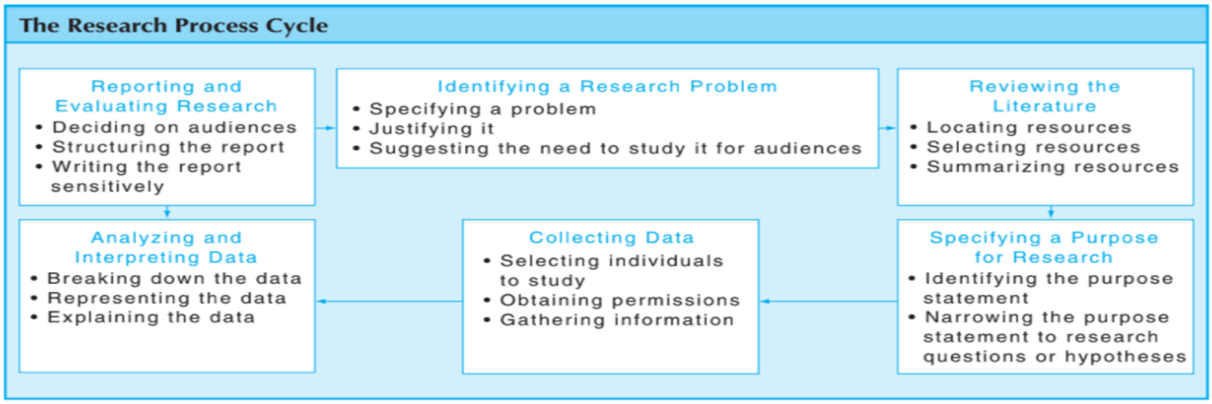

Figure 3. The Research Process Cycle. (Creswell, 2012, p. 8)

The steps above are the key to develop any study and should be fulfilled rigorously to accomplish the accurate results that are necessary to evidence the answer to the research question. This idea is supported by Walliman (2010) who claimed the following,

"Research is a very general term for an activity that involves finding out, in a more or less systematic way, things you did not know. Amore academic interpretation is that research involves finding out about things that no-one else knew either. It is about advancing the frontiers of knowledge" (p.7). Thus, research is a necessary endeavor for human beings to question, re-evaluate, discover, and re-discover natural or social phenomena in their constant search for knowledge.

Types of Research and Design

Research and design are divided into two major categories according to its way of collecting data, how an inquiry is carried out, and how the materials are used to obtain results. Qualitative research is basically focused on a description of a natural setting, in which the researcher does not manipulate and use an inductive approach in order to generate a theory by doing an iterative interpretation of the data collected through interview guides and observation tools, which makes qualitative research different from quantitative.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that qualitative research aims to analyze and understand human problems on the basis of interpretations and inductive exploration. Furthermore, Johnson & Christensen (2014) argue that:

> Qualitative researchers often view human behavior as being fluid, dynamic, and changing over time and place, and they usually are not interested in generalizing beyond the particular people who are studied. In qualitative research, different

> groups are said to construct their different realities or perspectives, and these social constructions, reciprocally, influence how they "see" or understand their worlds, what they see as normal and abnormal, and how they should act. (p.85)

According to what was mentioned by Johnson and Christensen, it is possible to infer the relevance of observing the human aspects that should be considered and let the research flow without manipulating it. This type of research participants project or create their own thinking about their environments, where the researcher becomes a viewer who is recording all the different changes that happen during the investigation without any intervention to modify the results.

More specifically, William (2007) states that "there are five areas of qualitative research: case study, ethnography study, phenomenological study, grounded theory study, and content analysis. These five areas are representative of research that is built upon inductive reasoning and associated methodologies" (p.67).

On the other hand, quantitative research is based on the study of a group of variables that can be evaluated before, during, and after an intervention and then analyze and measure the outcomes of the treatment given to the intervened group or groups.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) claim the following:

> Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. (p.4)

Therefore, quantitative research is characterized by being carried out under controlled environments where the focus consists on the factors that are being studied and constant ones that are not, and the participants are divided into groups to be manipulated in order to be analyzed and interpreted the results of the experimental process (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

According to this, quantitative research is concentrated on the manipulation of some factors in two similar groups object of the experiment in order to observe how the groups react to it to notice if after the intervention there might be any changes.

It is evident that the difference between qualitative and quantitative research lies in how the researcher approaches the dynamics of the factors that influence the flow of the information or the changes that can happen as a result of an intervention in a period of time.

The figure below shows the process observed during phases of a research process in both quantitative and qualitative methods, and it is possible to observe the selection of designs that could be applied on a quantitative approach. The study that will be carried out at the school Gimnasio Cartagena is based on Experimental Design.

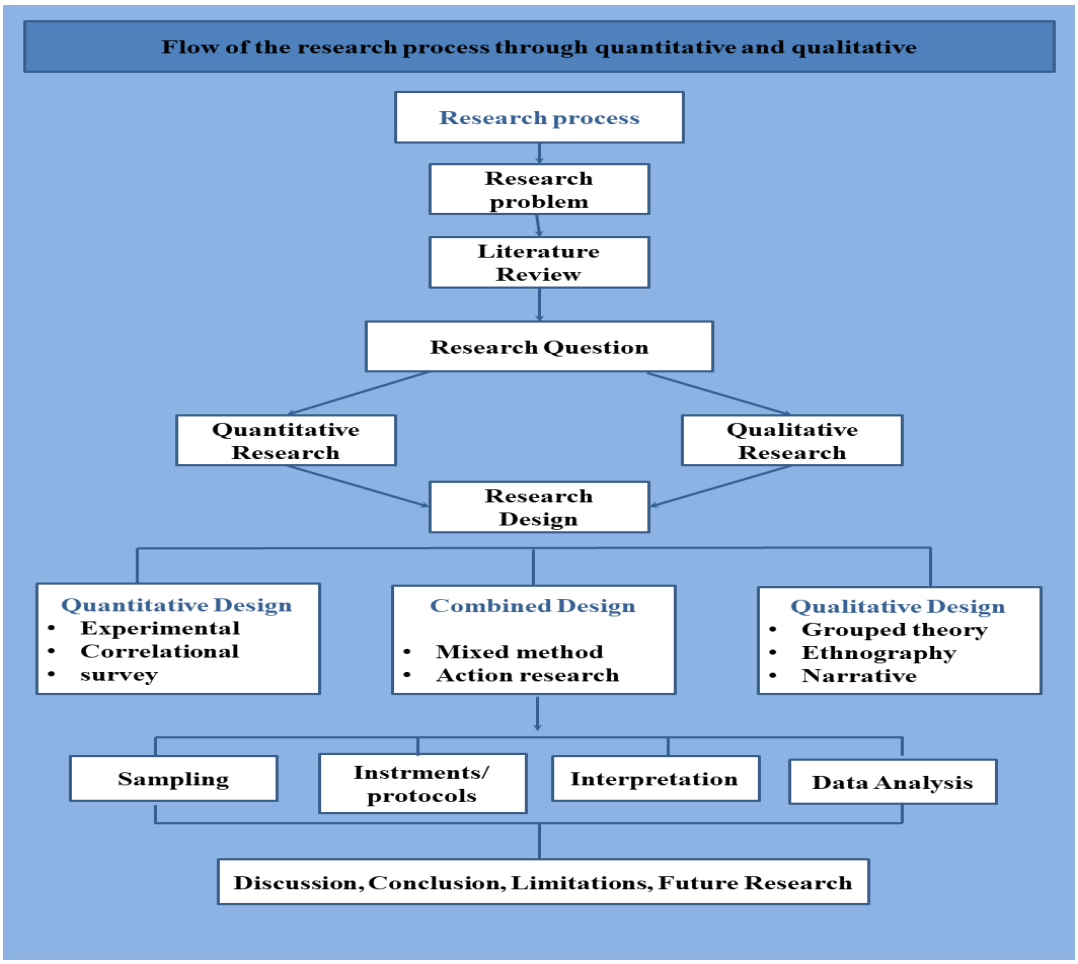

Figure 4: Flow of the research Process through quantitative and qualitative Research. (Creswell, 2012, p. 12)

For this research study, the researchers have chosen experimental design as the most appropriate methodology to answer the research question. The next section will present the reasons that justify this methodological decision.

Experimental Designs

Experimental design is based on the observation that a researcher makes with different groups with the same conditions and in which one of them has a treatment during a period of

time to see at the end of this period how the experimental group might change compared to the control group. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), “the essential feature of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and manipulate the conditions which determine the events in which they are interested, introduce an intervention and measure the difference that it makes"(p.272). It is clearly defined that experimental design must be focused on the observation of the changes produced by the interventions. On the other hand, Walliman (2010) stated that:

> Experimental research attempts to isolate and control every relevant condition which determines the events investigated and then observes the effects when the conditions are manipulated. At its simplest, changes are made to an independent variable and the effects are observed on a dependent variable. (p.11)

Experimental research can be classified into two categories: true experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs. Both studies entail action manipulation, but while true experiments also need random assignment, quasi-experiments do not. That is why Creswell (2012) affirms regarding this the following:

Although all experiments have common characteristics, their use and applications vary depending on the type of design used. The most common designs you will find in educational research are:

- Between Group Designs
  - True experiments (pre- and posttest, posttest only)
  - Quasi-experiments (pre- and posttest, posttest only)
  - Factorial designs

- Within Group or Individual Designs

    Time series experiments (interrupted, equivalent)

    Repeated measures experiments

    Single subject experiments. (p.307)

This means that there are different types of analysis and each one has some specific characteristics to develop a quantitative research design that is frequently framed by a structure that maximizes the reliability of the information gathered, following what it is stated in the research problem to be effectively achieved. The selection and division of groups allow for the research to make the supplied data more accurate.

Between group design means that two groups are under the same conditions, but only one of them is applied to any type of intervention. On the other hand, within group or individual design means that two groups are exposed to the same condition, and they both experiment the same intervention, it is important to mention that between and within groups design share that they both interpret after the intervention the results.

Taking into account the information above, it is possible to state that this research design is oriented to between-group design, more specifically to the quasi-experimental design, because it matches the process that was considered at the beginning of the study to apply in the school. First, a pre-test was applied to determine the actual vocabulary breath knowledge of the two groups involved in the study. The researchers used with one of the groups some specific memory strategies that were not used with the other group. This was done in order to observe if these strategies had an impact in the students' vocabulary breadth, and finally, a post-test was administered to both groups to obtain information that evidenced the potential impact of these

strategies.

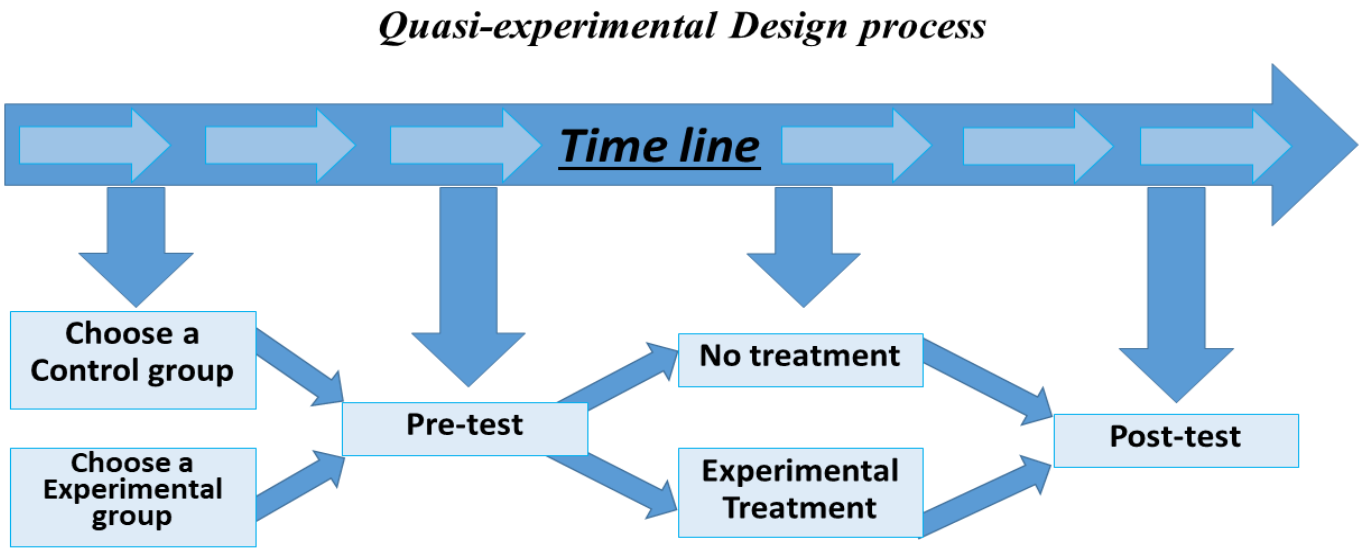

Figure 5: Pre and post test Design. (Creswell, 2012, p. 310)

According to Creswell (2012) "quasi-experiments include assignment, but not random assignment of participants to groups. This is because the experimenter cannot artificially create groups for the experiment" (p.309).

Besides this design considers a specific development in the research process as it is mentioned by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), "the field experiment is similar to the laboratory experiment in that variables are isolated, controlled and manipulated, but the setting is the real world rather than the artificially constructed world of the laboratory" (p.274).

Taking all this into account, the difference between a true experimental and a quasi-experimental design is the environment where the experiment takes place. In the case of a quasi-

experiment, it happens in a natural setting, which means that despite that there is some control by the researcher on the variables, the natural atmosphere produces in some way that the changes are totally different from the changes that would occur if it is an artificial or natural environment.

This section outlines the type of research, the design, participants, their context, the data gathering procedures, and the analysis of the data. This study focused on the vocabulary acquisition of young learners in an EFL context. The target goal of this experimental study was to apply specific strategies that focused on students' vocabulary acquisition during a period of six months. The target population of this study was first-grade students from two different classes at a private school, who were taught the same English curriculum by two different teachers, but under similar conditions, which will be described in detail further on this paper.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to find out the effect of the implementation of memory strategies on young learners' vocabulary breadth. Therefore, an experimental study was carried out. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), the fundamental conception of all experimental research is very simple; try something and observe it systematically. The idea to compare vocabulary acquisition in two groups of students, considering the application of vocabulary strategies in the teaching process, was an endeavor that resonated with this type of research.

A quantitative experimental pre-test was given to an experimental group (1°A) and control group (1°B) in order to establish a baseline. During six months, a series of explicit memory strategies were implemented systematically as part of English classes for the experimental group. One of the authors of this study was in charge of the experimental group and the control group was taught by a fellow teacher in the school who followed the same outcomes,

content, materials, and curriculum in general. The learning environment shared by these groups was very similar as it will be explained later in this section.

Before the implementation of the strategies in class, it was required to inform legal representatives of learners about the intervention. Consent letters explaining the research study were sent home to be signed by parents. After that, a planning stage took place. The teachers-researchers decided to teach the strategies for one and a half academic terms (equivalent to six months) in order to make this study relevant.

In terms of the lessons, English was regularly taught in ten hours weekly; for the purpose of this study, six hours were dedicated to teach, train, practice, and apply the vocabulary lessons in the control group. Forty-eight (48) words established in the curriculum were divided into three units. Along with them the strategies were taught.

The strategies were distributed in three units. The order of the implementation was applying images and sounds (songs and rhymes) for the first unit; employing actions (Total physical response) for the second unit, and creating mental linkages (placing words into context and associating them with familiar ones) for the third unit.

In order to obtain the most possible reliable results, every unit was developed in different stages: teaching, modeling, practicing, and applying. Then, the vocabulary progress of each participant was periodically measured through achievement tests. Since the participants of this research were young learners with very limited English knowledge, a cyclical approach was carried out. This means the process was often repeated throughout the weeks to make sure students internalized the strategies.

As explained above, the strategy chosen for the first unit was **applying images and sounds**. For this one, a series of songs were selected to teach the words to the learners. Several

hours were required to practice the lyrics of the songs. For instance, the word "*like*" was taught by using a song called "Do you like broccoli ice cream?" Then, the teacher suggested a modification in the sentences already learned, for instance: "broccoli" for "apple" or "mango." After this, the teacher wrote some sentences on the board and encouraged the learners to write their own.

For the second unit, **employing actions** was implemented. The teacher initially presented the words on the board. Then, a body movement for each word was suggested. Learners followed the previous movement. In some lessons, the movement was complemented with sounds. Then, the teacher proposed a game where one student represented the movement learned and a second student was in charge of guessing the word assigned to it. As a final stage of the lesson, the teacher wrote incomplete sentences on the board. As the learners thought about the missing words, the teacher mimicked, then learners had to guess the words.

Creating mental linkages was the strategy implemented in the third unit. Once learners were more used to the application of strategies, teachers-researchers decided to apply a more complex strategy for young learners: grouping, associating, and placing new words into context. Depending on the words to be learned, the teacher tried to make learners more aware of the use of a variety of strategies over the classes. For some groups of words, the teacher taught learners how to group them by kind, for instance, the words "red," "blue," and "white" or "first" and "then." In this way, learners could make groups to differentiate some words from others. In the case of associations, the teacher taught them how to learn words by using concepts that are already in their memory. For instance, the word "our" was repeated by learners everyday unconsciously when saying the Lord's prayer, Our Father. However, they did not know the meaning or spelling, so the teacher emphasizes on those aspects. Another example is the word

"carnival," which is very similar with the word "carnaval" in Spanish. This way, the teacher taught them how to use their L1 as a support for learning new words. After applying and practicing the strategy several times with different words, stories were provided by the teacher. The stories had the target words, and learners were in charge of highlighting them and discovering the meaning in context.

While strategies were being taught explicitly in the experimental group, a different teacher continued with the regular classes and same time intensity dedicated to English for the control group. Resources for both classes were the same (comfortable classrooms, air conditioning, course book, internet connection in the classroom, video projector, etc.). English classes were 100 minute-long and took place regularly early in the morning. The routine procedure used by the teacher in the control group was the traditional one followed at school; that is to teach vocabulary by showing images of the vocabulary words by projecting them with the video beam. Then, the teacher had them repeat the words several times. Finally, the teacher asked learners to work on the vocabulary section of their workbooks. The learners usually worked on activities, such as "fill in the blanks," "wordsearch," and "spelling."

After the application of the pre-test and the completion of the intervention, students took a post-test for vocabulary breadth (see description of the test in section: The Picture Vocabulary Size Test), so researchers could determine the impact that vocabulary learning strategies could have had in the development of students' vocabulary breadth. These tests results provided important and relevant information to be analyzed. It is necessary to note that even though the two groups shared very similar contextual variables, these could have been altered at moments due to characteristics of the school environment such as extracurricular activities, absenteeism, and external unexpected events. What the teacher-researchers did have control over was the

planning and delivery of the lessons and the application of the data gathering tools.

Participants

First-graders at ASPAEN Gimnasio Cartagena (AGC) were the target population for this research. They were 28 students between the ages of 6 and 7. They were all boys since AGC is an all-male school. Most of them started their formal education at this school, beginning at kindergarten. However, it is important to mention that it is in first grade (1°) where they first receive EFL education since the kindergarten process is more based on social skills and behaviors.

1°A class, the experimental group, had 13 students while 1°B, the control group, had 15 students. These students had English books and workbooks that were designed for native speakers and, in the context of AGC, these materials usually challenge students, who find they pose a high difficulty level. Throughout the years, it has been evident how first-graders struggle with the vocabulary presented in these books. Moreover, there is no formal record of the vocabulary students learn or are exposed to in kindergarten. Therefore, once students reach first grade, teachers need to determine the vocabulary level of learners. At this point, the school does not have a Diagnostic test at the beginning of each year in order to know students' vocabulary proficiency or an institutional strategy to systematically monitor students' vocabulary learning development. This is another reason why this study could be useful for this specific community.

Additionally, a few years ago, AGC moved to a new location, which represented a significant financial investment by the school for the improvement of its facilities. This has had an impact in the investment in other areas such as the updating of teaching resources and teacher training, which has posed a challenge for teachers who need to be resourceful and creative, especially when teaching young learners.

Data collection procedures and materials

A pre-test was applied to 1°A and 1°B, under very similar conditions the same day. The researchers were careful in aiming at generating the same external conditions for students to take the test, so such conditions would influence as least as possible students' results. The purpose of applying this test was to obtain diagnostic results from both groups in terms of their vocabulary breadth. This allowed the researchers to have a picture of the similarities and/or differences between the two groups at an initial stage. 1°B group would continue receiving teaching instructions in the usual ways while 1°A would be exposed to explicit, intentionally selected memory strategies systematically.

This research employs a Quantitative method where tests were the only instruments to collect data. First, students took a pre-test to measure their initial vocabulary breadth. Then, they took achievement tests throughout the process. Finally, they were applied a post-test to measure their vocabulary breadth once the time set for the purpose of this research was completed.

The section that follows will present and analyze the results obtained through the instruments applied and explain in detail each test.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the implementation of memory strategies on young learners' vocabulary breadth. In this chapter, the findings will be presented in the following order. The first part will focus on the data obtained from the pre-test applied to both groups in order to picture the initial situation. The second part will outline the data obtained from the post-test applied to both groups in order to evidence the progress. Finally, the data

obtained from the achievement (or progress) tests, applied during the implementation of the strategies, will be analyzed.

Since the aim of this research was to find out the effects of implementing memory strategies in the vocabulary breadth of first grade students at AGC, a private school located in Cartagena, Bolivar, the whole data of this study were quantitative information obtained from tests, so that each participant vocabulary level could be determined.

At this point, it is important to note, once again, that the same syllabus content was developed and conditions were kept as similar as possible for both groups. As a result of the implementation of the memory strategies, three important measures were gathered to be compared in both groups. Statistical data was obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and achievement (or progress) tests. Each one is presented and explained below.

Pre-test

As it was mentioned in the methodology, the pre-test utilized for the purpose of this study was PVST (Picture Vocabulary Size Test), which is a computer-based test of receptive vocabulary size for young learners designed by Anthony and Nation (2017). The test had 96 items and each correct answer was counted as 1 point whereas the wrong was 0. Additionally, the percentage value of each result was calculated. In this section, the data obtained from the pre-test applied to both groups will be presented.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) PRE TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	39	41%
2	Student 02	29	30%
3	Student 03	42	44%
4	Student 04	22	23%
5	Student 05	36	38%
6	Student 06	20	21%
7	Student 07	21	22%
8	Student 08	38	40%
9	Student 09	31	32%
10	Student 10	36	38%
11	Student 11	28	29%
12	Student 12	29	30%
13	Student 13	32	33%

Table 2. Pre-test scores of learners in the experimental group

CONTROL GROUP (1B) PRE TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	29	30%
2	Student 02	40	42%
3	Student 03	31	32%
4	Student 04	30	31%
5	Student 05	29	30%
6	Student 06	34	35%
7	Student 07	19	20%
8	Student 08	51	53%
9	Student 09	25	26%
10	Student 10	31	32%
11	Student 11	27	28%
12	Student 12	30	31%
13	Student 13	26	27%
14	Student 14	31	32%
15	Student 15	29	30%

Table 3. Pre-test scores of learners in the control group

The pre-test provided important results about differences and similarities in participants' vocabulary breadth. Therefore, statistical analysis was conducted based on the scores obtained from both groups, experimental and control. The average, median, standard deviation and other relevant data were calculated using Excel.

PRETEST			
Data / Variable: 1A Pre-test		Data / Variable: 1B Pre-test	
Variable selection: ROWS (1;13)		Variable selection: ROWS (1;15)	
13 values ranging from 21 to 44		15 values ranging from 20 to 53	
Maximun	44	Maximun	53
Minimum	21	Minimum	20
Rank	23	Rank	33
Average	32,38462	Average	31,93333
Standard error	2,08640	Standard error	1,93333
Standard deviation	7,52262	Standard deviation	7,48777
Sampling variance	56,58974	Sampling variance	56,06667
Kurtosis	-1,10957	Kurtosis	4,26115
Variation coefficient	23%	Variation coefficient	23%

Table 4. Statistical analysis of pre-test through Excel

As can be seen in table 4, some data obtained after the analysis, such as standard deviation, average and minimum score, allow us to interpret that both groups presented homogeneous features. Standard deviation in the experimental group was 7,52 and in the control group was 7,48. The average score in the experimental group was 32,38 and in the control group was 31,93. The minimum score obtained in the experimental group was 21 and in the control group was 20. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in the aspects presented above.

Nevertheless, the statistical analysis also showed relevant differences that deserve to be mentioned. The maximum score obtained in the experimental group was 44 while in the control

group was 53. Additionally, the rank, which is the difference between the lowest and highest score, was 23 in the experimental group and 33 in the control group. This could mean that a portion of the participants of the control group achieved considerable high scores. Kurtosis supported this idea, -1,10 in the experimental group and 4,26 in the control group. In other words, this means that the scores obtained by the participants of the control group are closer to the average than the scores obtained by the participants of the experimental group.

Post-test

After the implementation of memory strategies on vocabulary instructions with the experimental group, PVST (Picture Vocabulary Size Test) was administered by the researchers once again, this time as a post-test. Each correct answer was counted as 1 point whereas the wrong was 0, of a total of 97 items. Moreover, the percentage value of each score was calculated. It is important to mention that in both tests, pre and post, conditions were carefully arranged so they were if not the same, very similar. In this section, the data obtained from the post-test applied to both groups will be presented.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) POST TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	49	51%
2	Student 02	39	41%
3	Student 03	44	46%
4	Student 04	72	75%
5	Student 05	42	44%
6	Student 06	47	49%
7	Student 07	33	34%
8	Student 08	50	52%
9	Student 09	61	64%
10	Student 10	58	60%
11	Student 11	36	38%
12	Student 12	34	35%
13	Student 13	56	58%

Table 5. Post-test scores of learners in the experimental group

CONTROL GROUP (1B) POST TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	20	21%
2	Student 02	76	79%
3	Student 03	32	33%
4	Student 04	49	51%
5	Student 05	65	68%
6	Student 06	30	31%
7	Student 07	18	19%
8	Student 08	56	58%
9	Student 09	28	29%
10	Student 10	30	31%
11	Student 11	36	38%
12	Student 12	61	64%
13	Student 13	78	81%
14	Student 14	50	52%
15	Student 15	22	23%

Table 6. Post-test scores of learners in the control group

As well as in the pre-test, a statistical analysis was conducted after the implementation of memory strategies on vocabulary instructions with the participants of the experimental group. Based on the scores obtained from both groups, experimental and control, the average, median, standard deviation and other relevant data were calculated using Excel.

POSTEST			
Data / Variable: 1A Post-test		Data / Variable: 1B Post-test	
Variable selection: ROWS (1;13)		Variable selection: ROWS (1;15)	
13 values ranging from 34 to 75		15 values ranging from 19 to 81	
Maximun	75	Maximun	81
Minimum	34	Minimum	19
Rank	41	Rank	62
Average	49,76923077	Average	45,2
Standard error	3,347700792	Standard error	5,421474
Standard deviation	12,07030686	Standard deviation	20,997279
Sampling variance	145,6923077	Sampling variance	440,885714
Kurtosis	-0,045067963	Kurtosis	-1,165783
Variation coefficient	24%	Variation coefficient	46%

Table 7. Statistical analysis of post-test through Excel

The statistical analysis presented in table 7 revealed important differences and similarities in the scores obtained from the post-test administered to 1A and 1B. The highest score was obtained by a participant of the control group (81) and the lowest score (19) was also obtained from a participant of this group. However, the maximum score in the experimental group was 75 and minimum was 34. This is to say, the difference between the lowest and highest score is greater in the control group than the one of the experimental group. This could be considered as a first hint of a group with heterogeneous (control) and the other one with homogeneous

(experimental) features in terms of vocabulary after the implementation. The rank, 41 for the experimental and 62 for the control group, corroborated the previous statement.

The average score in the experimental group was 49,76 and in the control group was 45,2. It was higher in the experimental group. This represented a considerable difference. Additionally, the standard deviation in the experimental group is 12,07 and in the control group 20,99. This represents a difference of 8,92 and it is also statistically significant for the purpose of this study.

In order to carry out a deeper and more complete analysis, other important statistical data that must be determined is the difference between the pre and post-test result. Thus, the variance between the statistical analysis of the pretest and posttest was calculated. This data is presented and analyzed below.

1A - EXPERIMENTAL GROUP COMPARISON				
PRETEST		POSTEST		VARIANCE
Maximun	44	Maximun	75	31
Minimum	21	Minimum	34	13
Rank	23	Rank	41	18
Average	32,38462	Average	49,7692308	17,38461077
Standard error	2,0864	Standard error	3,34770079	1,261300792
Standard deviation	7,52262	Standard deviation	12,0703069	4,54768686
Sampling variance	56,58974	Sampling variance	145,692308	89,1025677
Kurtosis	-1,10957	Kurtosis	-0,045068	1,064502037
Variation coefficient	23%	Variation coefficient	24%	0,01

1B - CONTROL GROUP COMPARISON				
PRETEST		POSTEST		VARIANCE
Maximun	53	Maximun	81	28
Minimum	20	Minimum	19	-1
Rank	33	Rank	62	29
Average	31,93333	Average	45,2	13,26667
Standard error	1,93333	Standard error	5,421474	3,488144
Standard deviation	7,48777	Standard deviation	20,997279	13,509509
Sampling variance	56,06667	Sampling variance	440,885714	384,819044
Kurtosis	4,26115	Kurtosis	-1,165783	-5,426933
Variation coefficient	23%	Variation coefficient	46%	0,23

Table 8. Comparison of pre-post test of experimental and control

According to the data presented in table 8, the average score increased in both groups. However, the variance of this aspect is higher in the experimental (17,38) than control group (13,26). Moreover, the rank increases in the control group (29) whereas the experimental is 18, which represents a difference of 11. This was additional data that supported the idea that scores

obtained by participants of experimental groups were heterogeneous in comparison to the ones obtained by the control group.

Standard deviation variance was 4,54 in the experimental group and 13,50 in the control group, it represents a difference of 8,96. That is to say, that standard deviation intensified in the control group and it is high after the pretest. This means that the scores are spread out or far from the average score of this group. This is data that lead to think that results after the intervention in the experimental group are homogeneous and the in the control group are heterogeneous.

Achievement tests

Throughout the implementation of memory strategies on vocabulary instructions to the experimental group, nine assessment tests were administered to both groups under the same conditions. For the purpose of this study, these tests were called "quizzes" in order to avoid confusions among participants (students, teachers, and researchers). The data obtained is presented below.

Table 9. Quizzes scores of learners in the experimental group

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) QUIZZES

		UNIT 1 - APPLYING IMAGES AND SOUNDS			UNIT 2 - EMPLOYING ACTIONS			UNIT 3 - CREATING MENTAL LINKAGES		
		QUIZ 1	QUIZ 2	QUIZ 3	QUIZ 4	QUIZ 5	QUIZ 6	QUIZ 7	QUIZ 8	QUIZ 9
#	PARTICIPANTS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Student 01	100	80	80	100	80	80	83	83	100
2	Student 02	100	100	100	100	100	80	83	100	100
3	Student 03	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	83
4	Student 04	40	60	60	80	60	80	100	67	83
5	Student 05	60	60	80	80	40	80	50	83	100
6	Student 06	60	80	100	80	60	60	67	100	100
7	Student 07	100	100	80	80	80	80	83	83	67
8	Student 08	40	60	80	60	40	40	33	67	17
9	Student 09	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	83	83
10	Student 10	80	100	60	100	40	60	100	83	67
11	Student 11	100	100	60	100	80	80	100	67	67
12	Student 12	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	83	83
13	Student 13	100	80	100	80	80	100	100	83	100

CONTROL GROUP (1B) QUIZZES

		UNIT 1 - APPLYING IMAGES AND SOUNDS			UNIT 2 - EMPLOYING ACTIONS			UNIT 3 - CREATING MENTAL LINKAGES		
		QUIZ 1	QUIZ 2	QUIZ 3	QUIZ 4	QUIZ 5	QUIZ 6	QUIZ 7	QUIZ 8	QUIZ 9
#	PARTICIPANTS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Student 01	20	20	80	60	80	100	67	67	50
2	Student 02	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100
3	Student 03	60	80	40	100	100	100	100	83	100
4	Student 04	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	83
5	Student 05	80	60	40	40	100	80	50	67	50
6	Student 06	80	80	80	100	80	100	50	33	100
7	Student 07	40	60	20	80	60	20	67	67	50
8	Student 08	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	83	100
9	Student 09	20	80	100	100	80	80	83	67	100
10	Student 10	80	60	80	100	100	100	83	67	100
11	Student 11	100	100	80	80	100	80	100	83	67
12	Student 12	100	100	80	60	80	40	67	100	83
13	Student 13	40	80	60	100	100	80	100	100	100
14	Student 14	40	20	60	60	100	80	100	83	100
15	Student 15	20	80	100	80	80	100	50	33	67

Table 10. Quizzes scores of learners in the control group

The data obtained from the nine quizzes provided important similarities and differences. In order to compare and contrast the average scores obtained, during the implementation of the strategies in both groups, was calculated. An analysis was conducted and is presented below.

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE SCORES OF QUIZZES

STRATEGY	EXPERIMENTAL	CONTROL	DIFERENCE
1 - APPLYING IMAGES AND SOUNDS	83,59	71,56	**12,03**
2 - EMPLOYING ACTIONS	80,00	84,44	**4,44**
3 - CREATING MENTAL LINKAGES	82,85	80,00	**2,85**

Table 11. Comparison of average scores obtained from quizzes

Table 11 shows the average scores obtained from quizzes applied to both groups during the implementation of the three strategies. Applying images and sounds was the first strategy to be applied. The average score obtained from that strategy by the experimental group was 83,59

and the control group was 71,59 which represents a 12,03 difference. The second strategy was employing actions. The average scores obtained from this strategy by the experimental group was 80 and the control group was 84, that represents a 4,44 difference. The third strategy was creating mental linkages, the average results obtained were 82,85 and 80 for the experimental and control group respectively, representing 2,85 difference.

The highest average score was 84, and it was obtained by the participants of the control group during the implementation of the employing actions strategy. However, the same group also obtained the lowest score, 71,56 during the implementation of applying images and sounds strategy. This represented a difference of 12,03 when comparing with the results obtained by the experimental group during the same strategy. Moreover, the results obtained from the quizzes taken by the experimental group are more constant than the results obtained by the control group. These data and additional information will be discussed in the next sections.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This section presents the discussion of the research findings during the research process, a study that aimed to investigate the effect of the implementation of memory strategies on young learners' vocabulary breadth at AGC, a private school in Cartagena, Bolivar (Colombia). Data and relevant information obtained from this research that would be revealed further could be utilized in order to improve the teaching process in early academic stages as those in primary schools in which there is not much research that has covered this age range. It could also help to set up conditions for basic language learning foundations at schools sharing a similar context.

Most of the studies that involve memory strategies have been carried out with young adults or adults at schools or mostly in universities, where the intention of the researchers is

basically to discover the group or groups of strategies students use to learn, store, and recall words when they need them. Examples of these studies are mentioned in the section Theoretical framework, for instance, (Ahmed, 1989 ; Gu & Johnson, 1996), who intended to know what strategies were used by the students without giving them a certain group of strategies as a tool that could be used by them to learn the vocabulary words they were expected to learn in a period of time. Besides, Yalçın (2012) conducted a study to examine vocabulary learning strategies used by his students, with different English proficiency levels. The vocabulary tests and questionnaires applied to the participants showed that the proficiency level students used a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies, otherwise, the low proficiency ones did not. Likewise, Letchumanan, Muthusamy, Govindasamy, Potchelvi, and Farashaiyan (2016) conducted a study that helped to identify the various learning strategies that students use to understand a word.

The study mentioned before differs from this research because they are intended to know the vocabulary learning strategies used by teenagers and not to apply vocabulary learning strategies explicitly to have an impact on young learners to enhance their vocabulary breadth at the beginners English language proficiency level.

In the vocabulary strategies section, it is also mentioned that Rabadi (2016) and Letchumanan, et al., (2016) conducted studies that helped teachers to identify the kind of strategies used by students to retain a word in their long-time memory. Their research also helped teachers to know what strategies to apply or what activities to display in the classroom that make students use their preferred strategies or identify the ones they use more frequently. These studies also differ from the research carried out with the students of AGC since in this one, the teacher selected the strategies to be used in class with students in order to explore their

impact in student vocabulary learning. However, the conclusions of previous studies were valuable in order to determine the strategies to be implemented in this study, since some of them concluded that memory strategies were the ones that are more effective to make students store vocabulary words and the ones that were suitable in beginning levels taking into account the absorbent mind that students have in these low levels that help them to learn through concrete materials and activities like visual representations. Therefore, this study aimed to corroborate the impact of memory strategies in the particular context of AGC.

Then, it is important to mention if the information that was gathered in the methodology and the findings obtained in the results answered the question posed at the beginning of this study, hence the following data will concentrate on the specific objectives.

The first specific objective of this research was to determine learners' vocabulary breadth before the intervention through a pre-test. According to the findings displayed in table 3, such standard deviation and average scores let the researchers infer that the experimental and control group presented rather homogenous features in terms of vocabulary knowledge. This coincidence might have happened because most of the young learners were coming from the same educational level kindergarten and exposed to similar learning conditions. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that up to this intervention, teachers that have received students with the same characteristics in first grade have not before determined through agreed formal means the proficient vocabulary level of the students. Therefore, this test could be implemented as a diagnostic tool for teachers in order to plan a better curriculum.

Additionally, the results that were obtained from the PVST test, the methodology applied was a key factor to check in the pre-test how the 1st grade students at AGC identified the given words in the test; it is clear that the percentages achieved by each group were similar, but also it

is possible to observe that there was plenty of new vocabulary words that pupils were not familiar with.

The second specific objective was to determine the learners' vocabulary breadth after the intervention. The pre-test showed rather similar results in both the experimental and the control group, unlike the data obtained in the post-test that were different in both groups allowing the researchers to observe that the experimental had progress in the results in terms of vocabulary breadth after the intervention regarding the control group. Some features changed after the experimental group received direct instructions in memory strategies and the control group received the conventional vocabulary teaching instruction. The most important and relevant data obtained is the average, which increased substantially for the experimental group in comparison to the control group. Consequently, it could be affirmed that the memory strategies may have had a positive incidence in the participants of the experimental group. Even though it is relevant to mention that both groups increased their vocabulary breadth, the experimental group had better results in the post-test and a significant increase as a group in comparison to the other group.

Based on the research conducted to explore the problem of the lack of vocabulary in the first graders students at AGC, it can be affirmed that the implementation of memory strategies during six months, which means two academic terms, was effective in improving the students' vocabulary breath helping them to recognize the learned words when are seen again.

The students' vocabulary mastery of the words taught during the two academic terms can be demonstrated in the improvement of the scores obtained from the pre-test to post-test in the experimental group versus the control group:

- The experimental group had an average of 32 percent approximately in the pre-test and in the post-test increased 17,38 points in the average, which compared with the control

group that changed from 31 percent in the average to 45 percent increased 13,26 points in the average.

- The experimental group showed a difference of almost 5 points in the post-test results compared with the control group which means that there was statistically significant.

The information mentioned above can be observed in the following table:

GROUP	PRE TEST RESULTS AVERAGE	POST TEST RESULTS AVERAGE	VARIANCE
Experimental (1A)	32,3	49,7	17,3
Control (1B)	31,9	45,2	13,2

Table 12. Experimental and control groups pre and post-test variance

The results obtained from the pre-test were considerably helpful for the purpose of this since it let the researchers infer that learners from both groups present similar features in terms of vocabulary level. On the other hand, the results obtained from the post-test let the researchers affirm that the memory strategies instructions had a positive incidence in the vocabulary breath of young learners.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the implementation of a group of memory strategies on young learners' vocabulary breadth. In contrast to the conventional vocabulary teaching practices at AGC, this study implemented a combination of intentionally

selected and used memory strategies sequentially and directly taught in order to increase learners' vocabulary breath.

This research study is the result of the problem that English teachers from low level groups face every year in this particular school, trying to make pupils read and understand what they say in the English lessons. In this context, vocabulary acquisition is essential to students' language learning process since, together with grammar, it is the door to understanding the basics of the target L2.

In order to reach the purpose of this inquiry, The Picture Vocabulary Size Test (PVST) was implemented to identify the actual vocabulary breadth of the learners, which helped the researchers to determine at what level the students were at the beginning of the first academic period in the school. Based on the results obtained from the pre-test and what was researched in the theoretical framework, a selection of memory strategies were chosen for teaching a number of vocabulary words for six months.

From the experience gained in the application of memory strategies to facilitate pupils the learning of new vocabulary words and the implementation of the PVST, the following can be said:

- The use of different vocabulary memory learning strategies in low-level students can help to increase their English vocabulary breadth. Although there are different types of strategies these ones seem to fit better with the dynamics of the classes in these levels.
- Since students are in a bilingual context, their vocabulary learning is generally taken for granted. Their vocabulary acquisition could be reinforced if teachers actually followed up on their development, and if there were more explicit and intentional methodologies in place.

- The teaching of vocabulary should be considered as important as other skills since it is the basis for other skills to be developed more smoothly.
- The contributions and influence of this research for future studies allows for a reflection on how it is possible to innovate in existing methods through the application of explicitly selected ways to teach children; therefore, the PVST test offers a new alternative for teachers in diagnosing, planning, and verifying how much vocabulary can be learned.

Implications

- Through the implementation of learning strategies, the students who were involved in this experiment achieved better results in the quizzes, and they were able to improve the recognition of new vocabulary words in classes by increasing their vocabulary breadth.
- A very important implication of this research is the formal implementation of a software to determine the vocabulary breath of the students at the beginning of the year, which can help teachers to know in what specific vocabulary they have to work on and what strategies can be used to enhance the vocabulary breath of the learners.

Limitations

During the implementation of the PVST software and the memory strategies, there were some limitations:

- Time management: in the implementation of the PVST software the time that students spent to take the pre and post-test was more than expected, and besides the students had to learn the dynamics of the exam in order to be autonomous for the rest of the application of the test.

- Some issues related to the use of the software or the computers were evident during the application of the pre and post-test by learners. This was the first time some of them were using a computer. However, with some teacher's help the objective was accomplished.
- Absenteeism was the main limitation of the Achievement test given to students during the intervention, because this meant that they could not be carried out on all students in the planned time. Therefore, teachers had to reschedule the tests for the missing students.
- Resources: there was a need during the intervention for the teacher to adopt, search for, and create additional teaching material, which also represented a challenge in the research process. Due to the lack of material for teaching the specific vocabulary that students must learn on each academic term. The teachers are only provided with guide texts and students with reading and activity books.

Suggestions

- Elementary programs in bilingual schools could contemplate the possibility for students to take an initial vocabulary knowledge test to determine what they know in order to work and reinforce with the group during the new school year based on the real needs.
- Schools could implement teacher development programs around the implementation of learning strategies especially in the use of memory strategies to help students through their learning process.
- Elementary education university programs should include explicit vocabulary teaching and learning content given this is such an important element in language learning.

- The school should have a clear and formal academic structure to establish an explicit methodology and techniques of teaching vocabulary to strengthen teaching practices. These practices, can, in turn, result in unifying the teaching criteria, which can be monitored and evaluated by teachers and the institution for continuous improvement

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Appendix A

Pre-test results

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) PRE TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	39	41%
2	Student 02	29	30%
3	Student 03	42	44%
4	Student 04	22	23%
5	Student 05	36	38%
6	Student 06	20	21%
7	Student 07	21	22%
8	Student 08	38	40%
9	Student 09	31	32%
10	Student 10	36	38%
11	Student 11	28	29%
12	Student 12	29	30%
13	Student 13	32	33%

CONTROL GROUP (1B) PRE TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	29	30%
2	Student 02	40	42%
3	Student 03	31	32%
4	Student 04	30	31%
5	Student 05	29	30%
6	Student 06	34	35%
7	Student 07	19	20%
8	Student 08	51	53%
9	Student 09	25	26%
10	Student 10	31	32%
11	Student 11	27	28%
12	Student 12	30	31%
13	Student 13	26	27%
14	Student 14	31	32%
15	Student 15	29	30%

Appendix B

Post-test results

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) POST TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	49	51%
2	Student 02	39	41%
3	Student 03	44	46%
4	Student 04	72	75%
5	Student 05	42	44%
6	Student 06	47	49%
7	Student 07	33	34%
8	Student 08	50	52%
9	Student 09	61	64%
10	Student 10	58	60%
11	Student 11	36	38%
12	Student 12	34	35%
13	Student 13	56	58%

CONTROL GROUP (1B) POST TEST			
#	PARTICIPANT	CORRECT	%
1	Student 01	20	21%
2	Student 02	76	79%
3	Student 03	32	33%
4	Student 04	49	51%
5	Student 05	65	68%
6	Student 06	30	31%
7	Student 07	18	19%
8	Student 08	56	58%
9	Student 09	28	29%
10	Student 10	30	31%
11	Student 11	36	38%
12	Student 12	61	64%
13	Student 13	78	81%
14	Student 14	50	52%
15	Student 15	22	23%

Appendix C

Achievement tests results

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (1A) QUIZZES

		UNIT 1 - APPLYING IMAGES AND SOUNDS			UNIT 2 - EMPLOYING ACTIONS			UNIT 3 - CREATING MENTAL LINKAGES		
		QUIZ 1	QUIZ 2	QUIZ 3	QUIZ 4	QUIZ 5	QUIZ 6	QUIZ 7	QUIZ 8	QUIZ 9
#	PARTICIPANTS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Student 01	100	80	80	100	80	80	83	83	100
2	Student 02	100	100	100	100	100	80	83	100	100
3	Student 03	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	83
4	Student 04	40	60	60	80	60	80	100	67	83
5	Student 05	60	60	80	80	40	80	50	83	100
6	Student 06	60	80	100	80	60	60	67	100	100
7	Student 07	100	100	80	80	80	80	83	83	67
8	Student 08	40	60	80	60	40	40	33	67	17
9	Student 09	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	83	83
10	Student 10	80	100	60	100	40	60	100	83	67
11	Student 11	100	100	60	100	80	80	100	67	67
12	Student 12	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	83	83
13	Student 13	100	80	100	80	80	100	100	83	100
		83,08	**83,08**	**84,62**	**87,69**	**73,85**	**78,46**	**84,54**	**83,23**	**80,77**

CONTROL GROUP (1B) QUIZZES

		UNIT 1 - APPLYING IMAGES AND SOUNDS			UNIT 2 - EMPLOYING ACTIONS			UNIT 3 - CREATING MENTAL LINKAGES		
		QUIZ 1	QUIZ 2	QUIZ 3	QUIZ 4	QUIZ 5	QUIZ 6	QUIZ 7	QUIZ 8	QUIZ 9
#	PARTICIPANTS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Student 01	20	20	80	60	80	100	67	67	50
2	Student 02	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100
3	Student 03	60	80	40	100	100	100	100	83	100
4	Student 04	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	83
5	Student 05	80	60	40	40	100	80	50	67	50
6	Student 06	80	80	80	100	80	100	50	33	100
7	Student 07	40	60	20	80	60	20	67	67	50
8	Student 08	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	83	100
9	Student 09	20	80	100	100	80	80	83	67	100
10	Student 10	80	60	80	100	100	100	83	67	100
11	Student 11	100	100	80	80	100	80	100	83	67
12	Student 12	100	100	80	60	80	40	67	100	83
13	Student 13	40	80	60	100	100	80	100	100	100
14	Student 14	40	20	60	60	100	80	100	83	100
15	Student 15	20	80	100	80	80	100	50	33	67
		65,33	**74,67**	**74,67**	**80,00**	**89,33**	**84,00**	**81,13**	**75,53**	**83,33**

Appendix D

Calendar of the implementation

PERIOD 1 - 12 WEEKS							
UNIT 1 - CHANGES				UNIT 2 - COMMUNITIES			
WEEK	LESSON	WORDS		WEEK	LESSON	WORDS	
1 & 2	1	like	new	7 & 8	1	he	people
		my	backpack			she	letter
		you				about	
3 & 4	2	see	butterfly	9 & 10	2	look	delicious
		is	frog			the	snack
		little				another	
5 & 6	3	have		11 & 12	3	use	doctor
		me	three			this	mail
		too	fun			be	

PERIOD 2 - 6 WEEKS			
UNIT 3 - TRADITIONS			
WEEK	LESSON	WORDS	
13 & 14	1	of	carnival
		to	celebration
		green	costume
15 & 16	2	first	thanksgiving
		then	parade
		with	sleigh
17 & 18	3	white	America
		blue	moon
		our	school

UNIT	LESSONS	STRATEGIES
1 CHANGES	I AM SAM I MET TED TIP	Applying images and sounds
2 COMMUNITY	PEOPLE CAN HELP BUD AND HIS DAD JANE HAS A JOB	Employing action
3 TRADITIONS	CELEBRATION TIME THANKSGIVING TIME A FLGAG	Creating mental linkages

Appendix E

Achievement test sample

QUIZ SAMPLE 1

Choose the best word to complete each sentence. Circle the letter of the answer.

1. I have a _____ toy.

a. backpack
b. sack
c. new

2. I _____ the book.

a. new
b. like
c. backpack

3. I put the book in the _____.

a. hat
b. tree
c. backpack

4. _____ new backpack is big.

a. Me
b. My
c. Like

5. I will give the book to_____ .

a. my
b. me
c. you

QUIZ SAMPLE 2

Choose the best word to complete each sentence. Circle the letter of the answer.

1. _____ is my mom.

a. he
b. she
c. I

2. _____ is my dad.

a. he
b. she
c. I

3. They are happy _____ the new house.

a. people
b. letter
c. about

4. There are too many _____ in my class.

a. people
b. letter

c. about

5. She writes a _____ for her mom.

a. people
b. letter
c. about

Appendix F

Lesson plans

Unit 1 – Lesson 1

Dimensión: DIMENSIÓN COMUNICATIVA
Componente: ENGLISH
Grado: PRIMERO
Grupo: PRIMERO B
Año: 20201
Periodo: 1

Estandar: El niño evidencia un control dinámico de su cuerpo, un pensamiento concreto a nivel interpretativo que le permite dar respuesta a códigos matemáticos, lingüísticos y sociales; exhibe una lectura comprensiva, una destreza estética y una disposición para practicar la escritura formal. Es capaz de llevar a cabo un auto-reconocimiento, mostrar iniciativa y hacer el bien a través de hábitos básicos de piedad.

Competencia: EXPRESAR INQUIETUDES, HIPÓTESIS E IDEAS A TRAVÉS DE DIVERSOS LENGUAJES PARA TRANSMITIR, ENCONTRAR Y DAR SIGNIFICADO A LA INFORMACIÓN RECIBIDA.

Procesos y desempeños:

Adicionar

Proceso	Desempeño	Retirar
Proceso de Lenguaje Oral	Utiliza nuevas palabras en su vocabulario, entiende su significado y participa en diálogos y otras interacciones intercambiando diferentes roles.	Retira el proceso completo

Fecha de inicio y hora: 14/08/19 23:04
Fecha final y hora: 19/08/19 23:04
Proyecto: CHANGES
Pregunta problemica: HOW DO I CHANGE AS I GROW?

Titulo actividad: LET'S SING TOGETHER!
Descripción actividad: Initially, the teacher introduces the new words. Some songs with the words are played to practice the use of the words. At some points, the teacher asks learners to modify parts of the lyrics. For example: "I like broccoli" for "I like ice cream"
Conocimientos: VOCABULARY: like, my you, new, backpack
Aula especializada: Room 1A
Recursos: Video Beam, speaker, book

Unit 2 – Lesson 2

Dimensión: DIMENSIÓN COMUNICATIVA
Componente: ENGLISH
Grado: PRIMERO
Grupo: PRIMERO B
Año: 20201
Periodo: 1

Estandar: El niño evidencia un control dinámico de su cuerpo, un pensamiento concreto a nivel interpretativo que le permite dar respuesta a códigos matemáticos, lingüísticos y sociales; exhibe una lectura comprensiva, una destreza estética y una disposición para practicar la escritura formal. Es capaz de llevar a cabo un auto-reconocimiento, mostrar iniciativa y hacer el bien a través de hábitos básicos de piedad.

Competencia: EXPRESAR INQUIETUDES, HIPÓTESIS E IDEAS A TRAVÉS DE DIVERSOS LENGUAJES PARA TRANSMITIR, ENCONTRAR Y DAR SIGNIFICADO A LA INFORMACIÓN RECIBIDA.

Procesos y desempeños:

Adicionar

Proceso	Desempeño
Proceso de Lenguaje Corporal	Comunica estados de ánimo, sentimientos, emociones y vivencias, utilizando patrones motrices.

Fecha de inicio y hora: 03/12/19 08:00
Fecha final y hora: 11/12/19 10:00
Proyecto: CHANGES
Pregunta problemica: HOW DO I CHANGE AS I GROW?

Titulo actividad: Follow me
Descripción actividad: The teacher introduces the new words. Through movements, the teacher has learners guess the words. Then, he asks some learners to pass to the front and mimic some words, the rest of the learners shows cards with the words.
Conocimientos: VOCABULARY: look, another, delicious, snack
Aula especializada: Room 1A
Recursos: Video Beam, Books, worksheets

Author's/Authors' Biography

Alberto José Guardo Castilla is a highly committed, efficient, and responsible public accountant and teacher of English, Science and Math with more than eleven years of experience leading classroom instruction, designing curriculum, and working with elementary and middle school students in public, private schools, and EFL institutions. Alberto has exceptional leadership in the classroom, organizational and planning abilities.

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